

美丽和忧郁的守护者
曼斯菲尔德短篇小说选

Bliss

Although Bertha Young was thirty she still had moments like this when she wanted to run instead of walk, to take dancing steps on and off the pavement, to bowl a hoop, to throw something up in the air and catch it again, or to stand still and laugh at — nothing — at nothing, simply.

What can you do if you are thirty and, turning the corner of your own street, you are overcome, suddenly, by a feeling of bliss — absolute bliss! — as though you'd suddenly swallowed a bright piece of that late afternoon sun and it burned in your bosom, sending out a little shower of sparks into every particle, into every finger and toe?...

Oh, is there no way you can express it without being “drunk and disorderly”? How idiotic civilization is! Why be given a body if you have to keep it shut up in a case like a rare, rare fiddle?

“No, that about the fiddle is not quite what I mean,” she thought, running up the steps and feeling in her bag for the key — she'd forgotten it, as usual — and rattling the letter-box. “It's not what I mean, because — Thank you, Mary” — she went into the hall. “Is nurse back?”

“Yes, M'm.”

“And has the fruit come?”

“Yes, M'm. Everything's come.”

“Bring the fruit up to the dining-room, will you? I'll arrange it before I go upstairs.”

It was dusky in the dining-room and quite chilly. But all the same Bertha threw off her coat; she could not bear the tight clasp of it another moment, and the cold air fell on her arms.

But in her bosom there was still that bright glowing place — that shower of little sparks coming from it. It was almost unbearable. She hardly dared to breathe for fear of fanning it higher, and yet she breathed deeply, deeply. She hardly dared to look into the cold mirror — but she did look, and it gave her back a woman, radiant, with smiling, trembling lips, with big, dark eyes and an air of listening, waiting for something ... divine to happen ... that she knew must happen ... infallibly.

幸 福

尽管柏莎·扬已经30岁了，可走路时有时还会那样想跑上几步，在人行道上跳上跳下，来几个舞步，或者滚一下铁环，把什么东西抛向空中又接住，或者干脆一动不动站着傻笑——其实没有任何可笑的，不过是笑笑而已。

如果你年当30，走到你们家那条街的拐角处，突然一种极度幸福的感觉袭来——一种毫无杂质的狂喜！——仿佛忽然间嘴里吞进一块那天黄昏时分外明亮的太阳，它在你胸中燃烧发亮，一簇细密的光芒辐射到每一粒细胞、每一根手指和脚趾，此时此刻你会怎么样呢？

噢，难道除了“迷醉和狂乱”这些词就没法表达那种感觉吗？文明语汇多傻呀！如果身体像一把珍稀的小提琴一般给禁锢在盒子里，那要它又有什么用呢？

“不，小提琴的比喻还没有完全表达出我的意思。”她一边思考一边轻快地踏上台阶，手在包里摸索钥匙——她又跟往常一样，忘带了一——接着她又顺手摇了摇信箱。“这不是我想说的意思，因为——谢谢你，玛丽”——她走进大厅：“保姆回来了吗？”

“回来了，夫人。”

“水果送来了吗？”

“送来了，夫人，东西都齐了。”

“把水果拿到餐厅去可以吗？我要在上楼前把它布置好。”

餐厅里不但光线很暗，还特别冷。但柏莎还是脱掉外套，她一刻也忍受不了大衣穿在身上那种紧绷绷的感觉。一股凉气随之袭遍臂膀。

然而她胸中依然有那么一块地方在熠熠发光——那簇细密的火花就是从那里发出的。简直让人难以自持。她连气都不敢出，生怕把那束火焰扇得更旺，不过她还是深深地、深深地吸了口气。她甚至不敢看那面冰凉的镜子，可她还是看了，镜子里映现出一个容光焕发，面带微笑

Mary brought in the fruit on a tray and with it a glass bowl, and a blue dish, very lovely, with a strange sheen on it as though it had been dipped in milk.

"Shall I turn on the light, M'm?"

"No, thank you. I can see quite well."

There were tangerines and apples stained with strawberry pink. Some yellow pears, smooth as silk, some white grapes covered with a silver bloom and a big cluster of purple ones. These last she had bought to tone in with the new dining-room carpet. Yes, that did sound rather far-fetched and absurd, but it was really why she had bought them. She had thought in the shop: "I must have some purple ones to bring the carpet up to the table." And it had seemed quite sense at the time.

When she had finished with them and had made two pyramids of these bright round shapes, she stood away from the table to get the effect — and it really was most curious. For the dark table seemed to melt into the dusky light and the glass dish and the blue bowl to float in the air. This, of course in her present mood, was so incredibly beautiful.... She began to laugh.

"No, no. I'm getting hysterical." And she seized her bag and coat and ran upstairs to the nursery.

Nurse sat at a low table giving Little B her supper after her bath. The baby had on a white flannel gown and a blue woollen jacket, and her dark, fine hair was brushed up into a funny little peak. She looked up when she saw her mother and began to jump.

"Now, my lovey, eat it up like a good girl," said Nurse, setting her lips in a way that Bertha knew, and that meant she had come into the nursery at another wrong moment.

"Has she been good, Nanny?"

"She's been a little sweet all the afternoon," whispered Nanny. "We went to the park and I sat down on a chair and took her out of the pram and a big dog came along and put its head on my knee and she clutched its ear, tugged it. Oh, you should have seen her."

Bertha wanted to ask if it wasn't rather dangerous to let her clutch at a strange dog's ear. But she did not dare to. She stood watching them, her hands by her side, like the poor little girl in front of the rich little girl with the doll.

The baby looked up at her again, stared, and then smiled so charmingly that Bertha couldn't help crying:

的女人,嘴唇颤动,一双大眼睛乌溜溜的。她凝神倾听着、期待着……某种不同寻常的事情……好像她知道一定会发生……错不了。

玛丽端着一盘水果进来,盘上放着一只玻璃碗,一只蓝色碟子,盘子非常漂亮,闪烁着一种奇异的光泽,像在牛奶中浸过似的。

“要开灯吗,夫人?”

“不用,谢谢。我看得见。”

桔子和苹果上泛着一层草莓般的粉红色。几只黄梨光洁得像丝绸,白葡萄上覆盖着一层银色的粉霜,还有一大串紫葡萄。最后这一串她买来是想配餐厅里新铺的地毯。嗯,听上去确实不着边际而且荒谬,可这正是她买这些东西的真实动机。她在商店就想:我得买些紫色的,把地毯的颜色带到餐桌上。那时候听上去好像很有道理。

她把水果布置好,用这些亮堂堂、圆溜溜的东西摆出两个金字塔后,站到离桌子几步远的地方观看效果——的确不俗。黑沉沉的桌子好像融入了昏暗的光线,衬得玻璃碟子和蓝碗像浮在空中。当然,依她此时的心情,这里有一种无与伦比的美……她开始笑起来。

“别这样,别这样,我又在歇斯底里了。”然后她抓起提包和外套冲上楼,向保姆室奔去。

保姆坐在一张低矮的桌子旁边,正给刚洗完澡的小贝喂晚饭。小孩穿着一件白色法兰绒裙子和蓝色毛料上衣,漂亮的黑头发梳成一个很好玩的小尖顶。她看见妈妈时仰起头欢跳起来。

“诺,小乖,都吃了,做个好姑娘。”保姆说,她那努嘴的样子柏莎是很熟悉的,暗示她此时到保姆房里来很不是时候。

“她好吗,南妮?”

“今天下午她可真乖。”南妮低声说:“我们去了公园。我坐在一把椅子上,把她从手推车里抱出来,这时候来了一条大狗,把头搁到我的膝盖上,她抓住狗的耳朵揪。噢,你要看见她那样子就好了。”

柏莎想问让孩子去抓一条陌生的狗的耳朵是不是太危险了。但她没敢问。她站在那里望着她们,手垂在一边,像个穷人家的小女孩站在抱着洋娃娃的阔小姐跟前一样。

孩子又抬头望着她,目不转睛地瞧着她,笑容那么动人,柏莎不禁

“Oh, Nanny, do let me finish giving her her supper while you put the bath things away.”

“Well, M’m, she oughtn’t to be changed hands while she’s eating,” said Nanny, still whispering. “It unsettles her; it’s very likely to upset her.”

How absurd it was. Why have a baby if it has to be kept — not in a case like a rare, rare fiddle — but in another woman’s arms?

“Oh, I must!” said she.

Very offended, Nanny handed her over.

“Now, don’t excite her after her supper. You know you do, M’m. And I have such a time with her after!”

Thank heaven! Nanny went out of the room with the bath towels.

“Now I’ve got you to myself, my little precious,” said Bertha, as the baby leaned against her.

She ate delightfully, holding up her lips for the spoon and then waving her hands. Sometimes she wouldn’t let the spoon go; and sometimes, just as Bertha had filled it, she waved it away to the four winds.

When the soup was finished Bertha turned round to the fire.

“You’re nice — you’re very nice!” said she, kissing her warm baby. “I’m fond of you. I like you.”

And, indeed, she loved Little B so much — her neck as she bent forward, her exquisite toes as they shone transparent in the firelight — that all her feeling of bliss came back again, and again she didn’t know how to express it — what to do with it.

“You’re wanted on the telephone,” said Nanny, coming back in triumph and seizing *her* Little B.

Down she flew. It was Harry.

“Oh, is that you, Ber? Look here. I’ll be late. I’ll take a taxi and come along as quickly as I can, but get dinner put back ten minutes — will you? All right?”

“Yes, perfectly. Oh, Harry!”

“Yes?”

What had she to say? She’d nothing to say. She only wanted to get in touch with him for a moment. She couldn’t absurdly cry: “Hasn’t it been a divine day!”

“What is it?” rapped out the little voice.

“Nothing. *Entendu*,” said Bertha, and hung up the receiver, thinking how

叫起来：

“嘿南妮，我喂她吃晚饭，你收拾一下洗澡的家伙吧。”

“嗯，夫人，她吃饭时可不能换手，”南妮说，声音还那么低。“那样她会不舒服的，很可能会心烦。”

多么荒唐。要是必须把孩子放在别的女人怀里——当然不是像一把珍贵的小提琴一样放在盒子里——那生孩子干吗呢？

“噢，我一定要喂！”她说。

南妮很生气地把小孩递过来。

“诺，吃完饭千万别逗她乐。您总是逗她，夫人。我一会儿就来照看她！”

谢天谢地！南妮终于拿着浴巾走出屋子。

“我终于把你抓到手了，我的宝贝。”柏莎说，孩子向她靠了过来。

她一边翘起小嘴去够勺子，一边挥舞着小手，吃得很高兴。有时她一口咬住小匙，有时柏莎刚舀上一匙，她一摆手就推开了。

喝完汤后，柏莎转过身向着火。

“你真漂亮——真是漂亮极了！”她说，亲吻着暖融融的宝贝。“我多么爱你。多么喜欢你。”

她确实非常爱小宝贝——她身子往前倾时脖颈的样子、在火光照耀下显得透明、精致的脚趾头——突然那种极度幸福的感觉又来了，她又不不知该怎么表达——也不知道该怎么办。

“来电话了，要你接，”南妮说，她凯旋而归地抓走了小宝贝。

她飞快地跑下楼。是哈里打来的。

“嗨，是你吗，柏儿，你瞧，我要迟到了。我叫辆出租车尽快过来，晚宴推迟10分钟——可以吗，没关系吧？”

“噢，哈里，完全可以。”

“真的？”

她还能说什么呢？她无话可说。她只想跟他在一起待一会儿。她可不能荒唐地叫喊：“今天可是个神圣的日子啊！”

“什么？”那边突然小声说。

“没什么。请原谅。（译注 原文为法文。）”柏莎说完挂上话筒，心想

more than idiotic civilization was.

They had people coming to dinner. The Norman Knights — a very sound couple — he was about to start a theatre, and she was awfully keen on interior decoration, a young man, Eddie Warren, who had just published a little book of poems and whom everybody was asking to dine, and a “find” of Bertha’s called Pearl Fulton. What Miss Fulton did, Bertha didn’t know. They had met at the club and Bertha had fallen in love with her, as she always did fall in love with beautiful women who had something strange about them.

The provoking thing was that, though they had been about together and met a number of times and really talked, Bertha couldn’t yet make her out. Up to a certain point Miss Fulton was rarely, wonderfully frank, but the certain point was there, and beyond that she would not go.

Was there anything beyond it? Harry said “No.” Voted her dullish, and “cold like all blonde women, with a touch, perhaps, of anaemia of the brain”. But Bertha wouldn’t agree with him; not yet, at any rate.

“No, the way she has of sitting with her head a little on one side, and smiling, has something behind it, Harry, and I must find out what that something is.”

“Most likely it’s a good stomach,” answered Harry.

He made a point of catching Bertha’s heels with replies of that kind ... “liver frozen, my dear girl”, or “pure flatulence”, or “kidney disease”, ... and so on. For some strange reason Bertha liked this, and almost admired it in him very much.

She went into the drawing-room and lighted the fire; then picking up the cushions, one by one, that Mary had disposed so carefully, she threw them back on to the chairs and the couches. That made all the difference; the room came alive at once. As she was about to throw the last one she surprised herself by suddenly hugging it to her, passionately, passionately. But it did not put out the fire in her bosom. Oh, on the contrary!

The windows of the drawing-room opened on to a balcony overlooking the garden. At the far end, against the wall, there was a tall, slender pear tree in fullest, richest bloom; it stood perfect, as though becalmed against the jade-green sky. Bertha couldn’t help feeling, even from this distance, that it had not a single bud or a faded petal. Down below, in the garden beds, the red and yellow tulips, heavy with flowers, seemed to lean upon the dusk. A grey cat, dragging its belly, crept across the lawn, and a black

文明是多么愚蠢啊。

他们请了几个客人来吃饭。诺曼·赖特夫妇——很般配的一对，先生想开一个剧院，夫人热中于室内装潢。还有那个年轻人艾迪·沃伦刚出版了一本小诗集，大家争相请他赴宴。还有一位是柏莎“发现的人物”，名叫珀尔·富尔顿。富尔顿小姐具体干什么，柏莎并不清楚。她们是在俱乐部相识的，柏莎遇到有些古怪的美貌女人时就会很投缘。

气人的是尽管她们想待在一起，而且见过很多次面，也真正谈过心，柏莎还是对她捉摸不透。从某种意义上讲，富尔顿小姐有一种罕见而奇特的坦诚性格。但是所谓的“某种意义”总归是有界限的，出了格，她是不愿干的。

究竟有什么叫人摸不透呢？哈里说“没有”，说她很傻，像所有金发女人一样很冷漠，而且可能有点脑贫血。但柏莎对他的说法不以为然，至少目前还不同意。

“不，哈里，她那种坐下后斜着脑袋以及微笑的样子，还是有意思的。哈里，我一定要搞清是怎么回事。”

“很可能是胃口好吧，”哈里回答。

他顺着柏莎的话说了很多，什么“肝硬化，我亲爱的姑娘”，或者“纯粹胃气胀”或者“肾病”……等等。说来奇怪，柏莎很喜欢听，对这种素质挺欣赏。

她走进客厅把火生着，把玛丽精心布置过的垫子一只一只捡起，扔回到椅子和沙发上。一下子就不一样了，房间立刻恢复了生气。她准备扔掉最后一只时突然一时冲动地搂住垫子，连自己也吃了一惊。可是这样仍熄灭不了她胸中的火焰。噢，恰恰相反！

从客厅阳台那边打开的窗户可以俯视花园。花园尽头，挨着墙有一棵又细又高的梨树，繁花盛开，婷婷玉立，在翡翠一般湛蓝的天空映衬下显得镇定自若。即便从这么远看过去，柏莎还是情不自禁地觉得那树上没有一朵花蕾是孤零零的，没有一片花瓣是褪色的。楼下花圃中，红色和黄色郁金香花叶压枝，好像要在黄昏的黑暗中飘逸出来。一只灰色的猫拖着肚皮爬过草地，另一只黑猫紧紧尾随其后，那是它的影子。看它们的样子，那么有主意、那么敏捷，使柏莎奇怪地不寒而栗。

one, its shadow, trailed after. The sight of them, so intent and so quick, gave Bertha a curious shiver.

"What creepy things cats are!" she stammered, and she turned away from the window and began walking up and down....

How strong the jonquils smelled in the warm room. Too strong? Oh, no. And yet, as though overcome, she flung down on a couch and pressed her hands to her eyes.

"I'm too happy — too happy!" she murmured.

And she seemed to see on her eyelids the lovely pear tree with its wide open blossoms as a symbol of her own life.

Really — really — she had everything. She was young. Harry and she were as much in love as ever, and they got on together splendidly and were really good pals. She had an adorable baby. They didn't have to worry about money. They had this absolutely satisfactory house and garden. And friends — modern, thrilling friends, writers and painters and poets or people keen on social questions — just the kind of friends they wanted. And then there were books, and there was music, and she had found a wonderful little dressmaker, and they were going abroad in the summer, and their new cook made the most superb omelettes....

"I'm absurd. Absurd!" She sat up; but she felt quite dizzy, quite drunk. It must have been the spring.

Yes, it was the spring. Now she was so tired she could not drag herself upstairs to dress.

A white dress, a string of jade beads, green shoes and stockings. It wasn't intentional. She had thought of this scheme hours before she stood at the drawing-room window.

Her petals rustled softly into the hall, and she kissed Mrs Norman Knight, who was taking off the most amusing orange coat with a procession of black monkeys round the hem and up the fronts.

"... Why! Why! Why is the middle-class so stodgy — so utterly without a sense of humour! My dear, it's only by a fluke that I am here at all — Norman being the protective fluke. For my darling monkeys so upset the train that it rose to a man and simply ate me with its eyes. Didn't laugh — wasn't amused — that I should have loved. No, just stared — and bored me through and through."

"But the cream of it was," said Norman, pressing a large tortoiseshell-

“猫是一种多么令人毛骨悚然的家伙啊！”她结结巴巴地说，然后从窗口转过身，开始走来走去……

在这温暖的房间里，水仙花的味道是那么浓烈。是不是太浓了？哦，不。然后，她好像被花香袭倒似的，扑到一只沙发上，双手捂住眼睛。

“我太幸福——太幸福了！”她嘴里喃喃自语。

她好像从眼睑上方凝视着那棵美丽的、花朵盛开的梨树，想象它就是自己生命的象征。

真的——真的——什么都有了。她还很年轻。哈里和她挚爱如初，他们生活得很美好，是真正的好伴侣。她有一个可爱极了的小孩。他们不用为钱发愁。房子和花园绝对令人满意。朋友们——那些时髦、有激情的朋友们，作家、画家、诗人或者热中社会问题的人士——都是他们愿意结识的朋友。家里有书、有音乐，她还找到一位手艺不俗的小裁缝。夏天他们计划去国外，他们新来的厨子做得一手一流的蛋卷……

“我真荒唐，荒唐！”她坐起来，感觉目醉神迷。一定是春天来了。

没错，是春天来了。此时她累得连上楼去换礼服都迈不动脚步了。

一身洁白的礼服，一串玉珠，绿鞋子和长筒袜。不是这会儿刻意如此。站到客厅窗前几小时就在酝酿了。

她的裙子像落花一般发出柔和的沙沙声，一路传到大厅。她吻了下诺曼·赖特太太，她正准备脱掉那件非常有趣的桔黄色外套，衣服边上有一长串黑猴子图案，而且一直延伸到胸前。

“……哎呀！为什么中产阶级这么令人腻味——这么缺乏幽默感！我的天，我赶到这里纯属侥幸——多亏诺曼一路保护我。我的那些可爱的猴子弄得火车里的人很烦，大家共同对付我，差点用眼睛把我吃了。既不笑也不乐——那样倒还好。可好，都一个劲儿地盯着看——烦死了。

“最有意思的是，”诺曼说着把一只巨大的玳瑁单片眼镜压到眼眶上，“你们不会在意我这样说吧，面子？”（在家里和朋友中间，他们互相称对方为面子和脸蛋）“最有意思的是，等她烦透了后对旁边的女人说：

rimmed monocle into his eye, "you don't mind me telling this, Face, do you?" (In their home and among their friends they called each other Face and Mug.) "The cream of it was when she, being full fed, turned to the woman beside her and said: 'Haven't you ever seen a monkey before?'"

"Oh, yes!" Mrs Norman Knight joined in the laughter. "Wasn't that too absolutely creamy?"

And a funnier thing still was that now her coat was off she did look like a very intelligent monkey — who had even made that yellow silk dress out of scraped banana skins. And her amber ear-rings; they were like little dangling nuts.

"This is a sad, sad fall!" said Mug, pausing in front of Little B's perambulator. "When the perambulator comes into the hall —" and he waved the rest of the quotation away.

The bell rang. It was lean, pale Eddie Warren (as usual) in a state of acute distress.

"It *is* the right house, *isn't* it?" he pleaded.

"Oh, I think so — I hope so," said Bertha brightly.

"I have had such a *dreadful* experience with a taxi-man; he was *most* sinister. I couldn't get him to *stop*. The *more* I knocked and called the *faster* he went. And *in* the moonlight this *bizarre* figure with the *flattened* head *crouching* over the *lit-tle* wheel...."

He shuddered, taking off an immense white silk scarf. Bertha noticed that his socks were white, too — most charming.

"But how dreadful!" she cried.

"Yes, it really was," said Eddie, following her into the drawing-room. "I saw myself *driving* through Eternity in a *timeless* taxi."

He knew the Norman Knights. In fact, he was going to write a play for N. K. when the theatre scheme came off.

"Well, Warren, how's the play?" said Norman Knight, dropping his monocle and giving his eye a moment in which to rise to the surface before it was screwed down again.

And Mrs Norman Knight: "Oh, Mr Warren, what happy socks?"

"I *am* so glad you like them," said he, staring at his feet. "They seem to have got so *much* whiter since the moon rose." And he turned his lean sorrowful young face to Bertha. "There *is* a moon, you know."

She wanted to cry; "I am sure there is — often — often!"

He really was a most attractive person. But so was Face, crouched before

‘你难道没见过猴子吗?’”

“噢,没错!”诺曼·赖特太太加入到欢声笑语中来;“难道这不有意思吗?”

更有意思的事还是,她现在脱掉外套后的确像只机灵的猴子——一只甚至会用削下来的香蕉皮制作黄色丝袍的猴子。还有那浅黄色耳环,样子像晃来晃去的小坚果。

“好一个悲凉的秋天!”脸蛋说着在小贝的儿童车前站住。“当儿童车开进大厅的时候——”他挥手把剩下的话都挥掉了。

门铃响了。瘦削、苍白的艾迪·沃伦(跟往常一样)带着一副痛苦相进来。

“我没走错屋子吧?”他找话说。

“噢,我想是吧——希望如此,”柏莎愉快地说。

“我碰上了这么一个出租车司机,可怕的经历,他阴险极了。我都没法让他停车。我敲得越厉害他开得越快。月光下,那个扁头扁脑、样子奇怪的家伙伏在方向盘上。”

他打了个冷战,摘掉那条巨幅白丝围巾。柏莎注意到他的袜子也是白色的——很漂亮。

“真可怕!”她喊道。

“是啊,真是,”艾迪说着随她走进客厅。“我仿佛看着自己乘着一辆已失去时间概念的出租车奔向永恒。”

他认识诺曼·赖特。实际上,如果戏院计划付诸实现的话,他还想给诺·赖写剧本呢。

“嗨,沃伦,剧本怎么样了?”诺曼·赖特说着摘掉单片眼镜,眼睛向上翻了翻又垂下来。

诺曼·赖特太太也说:“噢,沃伦先生,您的袜子真漂亮哪。”

“你能喜欢它真叫人高兴。”他说,然后盯着自己的脚。“月亮出来后这双袜子就显得更加白了。”他那张清瘦愁苦的脸转向柏莎:“你知道,今天晚上有月亮。”

她想叫出来:“我知道有——经常有!”

他真讨人喜欢。当然面子也是,她穿着香蕉皮做的衣服蹲在火堆

the fire in her banana skins, and so was Mug, smoking a cigarette and saying as he flicked the ash: "Why doth the bridegroom tarry?"

"There he is, now."

Bang went the front door open and shut. Harry shouted: "Hullo, you people. Down in five minutes." And they heard him swarm up the stairs. Bertha couldn't help smiling; she knew how he loved doing things at high pressure. What, after all, did an extra five minutes matter? But he would pretend to himself that they mattered beyond measure. And then he would make a great point of coming into the drawing-room, extravagantly cool and collected.

Harry had such a zest for life. Oh, how she appreciated it in him. And his passion for fighting — for seeking in everything that came up against him another test of his power and of his courage — that, too, she understood. Even when it made him just occasionally, to other people, who didn't know him well, a little ridiculous perhaps.... For there were moments when he rushed into battle where no battle was.... She talked and laughed and positively forgot until he had come in (just as she had imagined) that Pearl Fulton had not turned up.

"I wonder if Miss Fulton has forgotten?"

"I expect so," said Harry. "Is she on the phone?"

"Ah! There's a taxi, now." And Bertha smiled with that little air of proprietorship that she always assumed while her women finds were new and mysterious. "She lives in taxis."

"She'll run to fat if she does," said Harry coolly, ringing the bell for dinner. "Frightful danger for blonde women."

"Harry — don't," warned Bertha, laughing up at him.

Came another tiny moment, while they waited, laughing and talking, just a trifle too much at their ease, a trifle too unaware. And then Miss Fulton, all in silver, with a silver fillet binding her pale blonde hair, came in smiling, her head a little on one side.

"Am I late?"

"No, not at all," said Bertha. "Come along." And she took her arm and they moved into the dining-room.

What was there in the touch of that cool arm that could fan — fan — start blazing — blazing — the fire of bliss that Bertha did not know what to do with?

Miss Fulton did not look at her; but then she seldom did look at people

前。脸蛋也蹲在火前，他正在吸烟，弹了下烟灰说：“新郎为何还不到？”

“他来了。”

大门砰地一声打开又关上。哈里大喊：“大家好。5分钟之内下来。”接着大家听见他上楼去了。柏莎不禁笑了。她知道哈里做事爱给自己加压力。毕竟，多等5分钟又有什么关系呢？但他宁愿骗自己，认为别人在意得不得了。然后他才极为冷静、泰然自若地步入客厅。

哈里对生活就有这股热情劲。哦，她多么欣赏这种气质！还有他那种好斗的激情——寻找一切胆敢挑战的对手，来证明自己的力量和勇气——这一点，她也很能理解。虽然这是偶尔为之，不太了解他的人恐怕觉得这有些可笑。因为有时候他冲锋陷阵之地并不存在战争……她跟大家聊着、笑着，直到他进来（这也是她意料之中的），才想起珀尔·富尔顿还没出现。

“我想是不是富尔顿小姐给忘了？”

“我想也是，”哈里说，“她来过电话吗？”

“噢，出租车来了。”柏莎面带捕获到新的神秘女性猎物、并且据为己有的那种意味笑了。“她简直就生活在出租车上。”

“如果她老这样，过不了多久就会胖起来的。”哈里冷冷地说，开始摇铃准备开饭。“对金发女人来说更是危险。”

“哈里——别说了，”柏莎提醒道，对着他大笑。

大家边谈笑着边等候又过了片刻，很自在，很忘情。这时富尔顿小姐微笑着走进来。她一身银光闪闪，淡淡的金发上束着一条银色发带，头向一边略微侧着。

“我来晚了吗？”

“没有，一点都不晚，”柏莎说，“过来。”她拉着富尔顿的胳膊一起走进饭厅。

那只冰凉的胳膊会把火扇起来——扇旺——扇旺——那种柏莎不知如何是好的极度幸福之火，触摸着这样一只胳膊会有怎样的感受呢？

富尔顿小姐并不看她，也不正视任何人。她垂着厚重的眼睑，露出

directly. Her heavy eyelids lay upon her eyes and the strange half smile came and went upon her lips as though she lived by listening rather than seeing. But Bertha knew, suddenly, as if the longest, most intimate look had passed between them — as if they had said to each other: “You, too?” — that Pearl Fulton, stirring the beautiful red soup in the grey plate, was feeling just what she was feeling.

And the others? Face and Mug, Eddie and Harry, their spoons rising and falling — dabbing their lips with their napkins, crumbling bread, fiddling with the forks and glasses and talking.

“I met her at the Alpha show — the weirdest little person. She’d not only cut off her hair, but she seemed to have taken a dreadfully good snip off her legs and arms and her neck and her poor little nose as well.”

“Isn’t she very *liée* with Michael Oat?”

“The man who wrote *Love in False Teeth*?”

“He wants to write a play for me. One act. One man. Decides to commit suicide. Gives all the reasons why he should and why he shouldn’t. And just as he has made up his mind either to do it or not to do it — curtain. Not half a bad idea.”

“What’s he going to call it — ‘Stomach Trouble’?”

“I *think* I’ve come across the *same* idea in a little French review, *quite* unknown in England.”

No, they didn’t share it. They were dears — dears — and she loved having them there, at her table, and giving them delicious food and wine. In fact, she longed to tell them how delightful they were, and what a decorative group they made, how they seemed to set one another off and how they reminded her of a play by Chekhov.

Harry was enjoying his dinner. It was part of his — well, not his nature, exactly, and certainly not his pose — his — something or other — to talk about food and to glory in his “shameless passion for the white flesh of the lobster” and “the green of pistachio ices — green and cold like the eyelids of Egyptian dancers”.

When he looked up at her and said: “Bertha, this is a very admirable *soufflée*!” she almost could have wept with child-like pleasure.

Oh, why did she feel so tender towards the whole world tonight? Everything was good — was right. All that happened seemed to fill again her brimming cup of bliss.

And still, in the back of her mind, there was the pear tree. It would be

似是而非的奇怪笑容，嘴唇上翘，好像她是靠听觉而不是视觉生活的。突然间，似乎俩人经过了长久而亲昵的对视，似乎在向对方问：“你，也一样？”柏莎明白珀尔·富尔顿在搅动灰色盘子里盛着的红汤时，心里的感受和她别无二致。

那么其他人呢？面子和脸蛋、艾迪和哈里，他们勺起勺落——不时地用餐巾点点嘴唇，撕碎着面包，在觥筹交错间，都在说着什么。

“我在阿尔发演出会上见过她——扮演一个很古怪的小人。她不仅把头发全剪光了，而且好像还把大腿、胳膊、脖子和那可怜的小鼻子也剪得不像样子了。”

“她跟米切尔·奥特关系很密切？”

“你是说写《爱在假牙》的那人吗？”

“他要给我写部戏，一部独幕剧，一个角色决定自杀。诉说他为什么要自杀或不自杀的理由。正在他要么自杀要么不自杀的激烈斗争时——一落幕了。戏还是有点味道的。”

“他这部戏打算叫什么来着——《肚子疼》”？

“我觉得在法国的一份小评论杂志上碰到过类似的构思，那份杂志在英国还不出名呢。”

不，大家没有她那种感受。他们都很可爱——很可爱——她很乐意请他们来，坐在自家的桌边，献上美酒佳肴。其实，她多么想说他们多么讨人喜欢，是一帮多么体面的人，如何彼此衬托得更加出色，又是如何让她想起契诃夫的戏剧。

哈里完全沉浸在美食享受中。他喜欢谈论饮食、炫耀他对大虾白色肉体、阿月浑子绿色果冰——又绿又冷，像埃及舞女的眼皮——赤裸裸的贪婪激情。这确实是——还谈不上是天性，当然更不是卖弄，总之是他的——一种爱好吧。

他抬头看着她说：“柏莎，这块蛋奶酥非常可口！”她听了简直像个孩子般激动得快流泪了。

啊，为什么她觉得今晚世界如此温柔？一切都那么美好——丝毫不差。所有发生的这一切似乎再次注入她那快要洋溢出来的幸福之杯中。

然而，她内心一隅还惦记着那棵梨树。此刻它一定散发着柔和的银